

Vermont Department of Education
Wendy Ross, Even Start State Coordinator
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501



Vermont Even Start Family Literacy Program



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Vermont's Even Start Programs

Barre Even Start

Stephanie Rubin, Coordinator
Brook Street Family Literacy Center
45 Brook Street
Barre, VT 05641
(802) 476-8474 x 118
(802) 479-4070 fax
srubin@cvcac.org

Central Orleans Family Education Center Even Start Program

Deb Leach, Coordinator
COFEC Building
100 Kinsey Road
Barton, VT 05822
(802) 525-4062
(802) 525-4062 fax
debleech@hotmail.com

Even Start for the New American Community

Maria Mercedes Avila, Coordinator
Vermont Adult Learning
462 Hegeman Avenue
Colchester, VT 05446
(802) 999-4985
(802) 846-7228 fax
mavila@vtadultlearning.org

Lamoille Valley Even Start

Tracy Collier, Coordinator
Lamoille Valley Even Start
197 Harrel Street
Morrisville, VT 05661
(802) 888-7993 ext. 217
esadmin@vtlink.net

Rutland Region Even Start

Judith Lashof, Coordinator
Rutland Central SU
257 South Main St., Suite 1
Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 747-5094
(802) 775-7319 fax
jlashof@rcsu.org

Even Start State Coordinator

Wendy Ross
Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
(802) 828-5148
(802) 828-0573 fax
wendy.ross@state.vt.us
wendyross@education.state.vt.us

What is the Even Start Program?

Even Start is a federally funded program that integrates adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education into a comprehensive family literacy program that breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty and low literacy.

Even Start programs offer educational services primarily to parents and children from birth through age seven. Families are selected for participation in Even Start based on their level of economic and educational needs.

Even Start builds on existing high quality adult, early childhood, and parenting services to provide family centered programming of sufficient duration and intensity to support high educational achievements and economic self sufficiency.



How does Even Start work?

Even Start provides comprehensive education services to improve children's academic success and increase parents' economic opportunities by:

- ♦ Helping children to reach their full potential as learners
- ♦ Providing adult education for parents
- ♦ Helping parents to become full partners in their children's education



Program services are designed to build on existing community resources to offer educational and support services that help parents and children learn and succeed together. The following Even Start program services are integrated, distinguishing Even Start from other educational programs.

Early Childhood & School Age Education

Developmentally appropriate education services are designed to prepare children for successful entry into kindergarten and school programs.

Adult Education

High quality instructional services address basic skills, English as a Second language, or the acquisition of secondary credentials such as the GED or the Adult Diploma.

Parenting Education

High quality parenting training focuses on helping parents be the primary teachers and full partners in their children's education.

Interactive Literacy Activities

Integrated into adult and parenting education programs, ILA time offers interactive literacy activities for parents and their children.

Home Based Instruction is an important part of Even Start services. These visits support the transfer of learning from the other program components to the daily lives of the families.

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

All Even Start applications are submitted by community collaborations that build on existing high quality services in the community. The development of an Even Start program requires a partnership that includes:

- ♦ One or more local education agencies, *and*
- ♦ A public, private, or community based non-profit organization, a public agency, or an institution of higher education other than a local education agency.



Applicants must demonstrate a history of providing high quality services to families in the community to be served as well as an ability to work collaboratively and effectively with partner organizations.

Who is eligible to participate?

Families participating in Even Start programs must have a parent who is eligible for enrollment in adult education programs or is enrolled in a secondary school and has a child under eight years of age.

Even Start programs serve the families who are most in need of comprehensive family literacy services based on limited incomes and low literacy.